



NOTES FOR COSTUME DESIGNERS

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Introduction

These notes have been compiled to support new and experienced Costume Designers. Please feel free to let anyone on the Technical Group know about new suppliers, stock, builders, or problems with these notes, etc. so they can be improved to help make the technical side of putting on a production more efficient for the next person. A Production Contact list is held by the Technical Group.

Read the Play

Meet the director

- Discuss ideas, period etc
- Set date for Costume call – usually a Sunday about 2- 3 weeks before the get-in.
- Make sure that the Director builds the date in to the rehearsal schedule.

Go to the Production meeting

- Establish budget.
- If there are to be any hires (eg uniforms) these must be built in to the budget.
- Liaise with the set designer either to suggest themes or check whether they want something specific.

Go to the read through

- Not all directors have this, but it is a good idea to go if there is one.
- You can meet all the cast and most importantly – take a tape measure and get all the measurements. Also get contact details for all cast.
- If it is a large cast play, you may want to ask the director if there are any actors with a smaller part or ASM who is not fully employed, who may want to help with wardrobe duties (helping with pulling out boxes etc or liaising with other cast members regarding items they can provide)

In Wardrobe

- Set up a rail with show name, your name, phone number. There are dividers in the cupboard; these can be named for each cast member – use labels rather than writing direct onto the divider. Start to pull out costumes

Cast and Fittings

- Once the rehearsal schedule is announced, decide when you would like to do fittings. If you are arranging fittings during rehearsal time, you will need to liaise with the director but be firm and set aside plenty of time. Otherwise cast will come in either on their days off or on their way to rehearsal. It can take up to an hour to fit one person, more of course if they have multiple costumes.

- Sometimes the Director will ask to be at the fittings. This can be useful, because they can approve the costume there and then. However it might be best use of time if you do preliminary fittings on your own first to dispense with obvious rejects.
- It is a good idea to put away any unwanted costumes as you go.
- It is always best to put away any boxes you have got out – it really helps to keep the wardrobe tidy.

Sewing, Making

- If you need help with sewing, making – there is a list of people inside the Cupboard door in wardrobe. Give them plenty of warning.
- Sometimes you can get a group into sew in wardrobe. Can be fun – especially if there is a bottle or two of wine.

Suppliers

- If you need to hire or buy anything, there is a list of suppliers that the Tower has used here <https://www.towertheatre.org.uk/notes/suppliers.pdf> (but that doesn't stop you going elsewhere if you wish)

Costume Call

- Make sure that the Director knows you will need plenty of time
- Usually, the Director will wait in the rehearsal room and either individuals or the whole cast will go up to be looked at etc. By then very little needs to be done – just last minute bits.

Get-In

- Ask the SM to assign some cast members to bring the costumes up to the dressing room. It may be useful to take an iron and board up to the dressing room if there is room.
- Usually, the costumes are not worn on the get-in Tech. If the show is at another venue, liaise with the SM about getting the costumes transported.

Dress Rehearsal

- It is important to be at the DR in case of last minute details. Most designers go to the 1st Night, too.

Last Performance

- Again it is important to be there. Ask the SM to get a couple of the cast to bring the costumes down to wardrobe.
- There may be washing, and cleaning. Cleaning costs come out of the budget. Take everything off the rail and you are done.
- If possible, put some or all of the costumes away after the last night

Party, Dinners

- Do not forget the party, dinners, reunions!